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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [MCAP](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MARR](#) [PINS](#) [PNAT](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: DHI QAR: FIGHTING BETWEEN JAM AND IRAQI SECURITY
FORCES IN TRANSFERRED PROVINCE

Classified By: DHI QAR PRT DEPUTY TEAM LEADER RICHARD RILEY FOR REASONS
1.4 (B), AND (D)

11. (U) This is a PRT Dhi Qar cable.

12. (C/REL MNC-I) Summary: This is a situation report on fighting in Dhi Qar Province between the Jaish Al-Mahdi (JAM) Militia, the Iraqi Police (IP) and Iraqi Army (IA)(hereinafter referred to collectively as the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF)) and elements of the Badr Corps, which began at approximately 2200 the night of 15 May. Elements of all sides have received casualties. The situation is developing, and not all the facts are known at this time. As of now, Nassiriyah is reportedly under the control of the ISF, and a ceasefire is potentially in the works. End Summary

13. (C/REL MNC-I) Since approximately 2200 hours on night of May 15, 2007, elements of the JAM, ISF and Badr Corps have engaged in a pitched battle in downtown Nassiriyah, capital of Dhi Qar province, as well as the city of Al-Shatrah, located approximately 52 KM north of Nassiriyah. Current reporting from military and DOS sources indicate that there are many casualties, with one report indicating that there are &dozens of casualties8 at the Nassiriyah Central Hospital. Coalition Forces have been contacted by the provincial government with a request for possible assistance with the casualties as they reportedly number too many to be handled by the central hospital. One report by the Associated Press has indicated nine dead and 75 wounded. The clash has effectively closed down the cities of Al Nassiriyah (Capital of Dhi Qar province), Suq al-Shuyukh, Dhi Qar,s second largest city, as well as Al-Shatrah.

14. (C/REL MNC-I) There are two possibly conflicting stories as to what incited this clash between these two militias and the ISF. One story is that the JAM commander for al-Gharaff, a city located approximately 15 KM north of Nassiriyah, was arrested by the Al-Shatrah City Police on 15 May, based on an outstanding arrest warrant, and transported to the jail located at the Tactical Support Unit (TSU) at the Provincial Joint Operations Center (PJOC) in downtown Nassiriyah. Another story indicates that the Al-Shatrah Police arrested an undetermined number of JAM members for emplacing IEDs in the vicinity of al-Shatrah. This report makes it unclear the identity of these members arrested for emplacing IED,s - it could well be that the senior JAM commander was in fact part of this group seen emplacing IEDs - if that version of the story is correct. (Comment: the city of Al-Shatrah is known for its heavy JAM presence. End Comment). The report indicating that a senior JAM commander was arrested continues by stating that once the prisoner was transported to the TSU

jail in Nassiriyah, representatives of JAM approached the TSU Commander, Colonel Naji Rostum Sahra al-Joubir (AKA Abu Liqa), and demanded the JAM leader's release. (Comment: Naji Rostum Sahra Al Joubir is also a senior Badr Corps member. End Comment). The TSU Commander refused to release the prisoner. JAM then fired several RPG's at the PJOC building and exchanged small arms fire with the IPs at the PJOC. Some unconfirmed reports indicate that Naji Rostum Sahra Al Joubir was either killed or wounded in that exchange. The fighting then escalated through the evening and into the morning as a general confrontation between the ISF, Badr Corps, and JAM.

¶5. (C/REL MNC-I) Military personnel located on Tallil Air Base have spoken with BRIG Saad, CDR Third Brigade, Tenth Division of the Iraqi Army, circa 1140 on 16 May and he indicated that he controls all check points in Al-Nassiriyah, and that the city is under his control. However, we understand that city services continue to be disrupted and that a curfew is in effect. Other contacts in the city of Nassiriyah still report the exchange of heavy weapons fire, though we have also heard that the members of the TSU have gained control of the OMS building in Nassiriyah and continue to patrol the streets. We also understand that the IP requested a cease fire with JAM late morning of 16 May. JAM is reportedly demanding compensation for the all of the rounds and munitions that they have used in the fight. Latest reporting on casualties also indicate that Colonel Jawad, Commander of the Anti-Terrorist Unit for the IP has died from injuries sustained in the conflict. We also received a report morning of 16 May that some 200 JAM members were rallying in Al-Shatrah, attempting to take over the IP building in that city. There have also been several large explosions heard in the area, with one report indicating eight large explosions and automatic fire observed.

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¶6. (C/REL MNC-I) We also have reports from the city of Suq Al-Shuyukh, the second largest city in Dhi Qar, and located approximately 40 KM southeast of Al-Nassiriyah, that as of this morning, JAM, and not the ISF, controlled the security in the city. (Comment: Suq Al-Shuyukh is also known for its heavy JAM presence. End comment.) There was no reported fighting in Suq Al-Shuyukh last night, but at approximately 1000 hours on the morning of 16 May, JAM took over the IP check points in Suq Al-Shuyukh with no apparent resistance from the IP. We have been told that the IP manning the checkpoints in Suq al-Shuyukh heard that they would not be supported by Coalition Forces were a fight to ensue between themselves and JAM, and thus made the decision to withdraw rather than risk a confrontation. (Comment: It is also well known that the Dhi Qar IP is heavily infiltrated by JAM at the lower ranks, which could also account for their decision to not engage JAM for control of the checkpoints in Suq al-Shuyukh. End Comment). We believe that JAM moved to secure the checkpoints in Suq al-Shuyukh in order to head off any confrontation with the ISF or Badr Corps, or at least to better position themselves should the conflagration in Nassiriyah extend to Suq Al-Shuyukh. We have also heard reports that JAM has closed Alternate Supply Route Jackson between Suq Al-Shuyukh and Nassiriyah. However, this is not yet confirmed.

¶6. (U) We will give further updates as information becomes available.
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